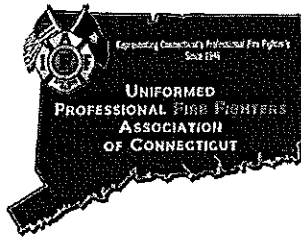


UNIFORMED PROFESSIONAL FIRE FIGHTERS ASSOCIATION OF CONNECTICUT  
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Good afternoon, Honorable Chairmen Rep. Tercyak and Sen. Gomes, members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee, my name is Steve McDuell, president of S-15 which represents 110 firefighters. I am submitting testimony in **support** of HB 6873, An Act Concerning Injured Firefighters and Sick Leave Benefits.

This bill is critical to ensuring that employees of the State of Connecticut are not punished by their employer for getting injured while volunteering in their community. Some history:

A Captain with the Bradley Airport Fire Department was injured as a volunteer, fighting a fire in her home town of East Windsor, which caused her to miss 12 weeks of work with the State. She had notified the CAA HR department and was approved by HR to use the sick time she had accrued over her career to continue receiving a paycheck. Upon her return to work, she was notified that the approval to use sick time was in error and she was responsible for paying the State back \$23,000; she lost all accrued sick leave, vacation leave, 12 weeks of department seniority, and 12 weeks of State seniority. This strikes at the heart of the issue of volunteering and having the necessary protections in place through statute and collective bargaining to ensure members are not adversely affected by the giving of their time to their community. If this legislation is not passed, the effect on volunteers and their communities could be devastating.

Respectfully,  
Steve McDuell

President, Local S-15